UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-EIGHTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
14th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 19 October 1993
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. MONGBE	(Benin)
later:	Mr. RYSINSKI (Vice-Chairman)	(Poland)
later:	Mr. MONGBE (Chairman)	(Benin)

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Distr. GENERAL
A/C.2/48/SR.14
17 November 1993
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

93-81702 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/48/3, A/48/159-E/1993/59, A/48/172, A/48/182, A/48/183-E/1993/74 and Add.1, A/48/188-E/1993/78, A/48/276, A/48/338, A/48/353-S/26372, A/48/484-S/26552, A/48/498)

1. Mr. ANDREEV (Bulgaria) noted that the deliberations on the report of the Economic and Social Council coincided with restructuring of the economic and social sector of the United Nations, which would be decisive for the overall strengthening of the Council. The past two years had been marked by considerable progress in that respect, and the Council's regular session of 1993 had been a further step forward in that direction.

2. The discussions held during the high-level segment of the Council under the important item entitled "World Summit for Social Development, including the role of the United Nations system in promoting social development" were particularly important, for they had done much to specify further how the Summit could interlink the social aspects of development with the problems of enhancing economic efficiency and ensuring favourable conditions for political democracy. Those issues were particularly relevant to countries which, like Bulgaria, were undertaking radical economic and political reforms and acutely felt the need for an integrated political, economic, social and environmental approach.

3. The participation of high-level representatives of United Nations specialized agencies in the coordination and operational activities segments had made a positive contribution to the identification of ways and means of improving cross-sectoral coordination. That would help to strengthen the Organization's capacity to respond in emergency situations and to devise appropriate policies for preventing and controlling diseases which were particularly severe in some parts of the world.

4. Regarding the United Nations system for operational activities and the steps taken to make it more responsive to the needs of Member States in the new international environment, it was important to determine the structure of the governing councils of the various funds and programmes promptly in order to make the system more operational as soon as possible. Bulgaria supported the view that, given the increase in technical assistance requirements in the current circumstances, the future functioning of the system would depend largely on the mobilization of adequate resources. The effective and prompt implementation of General Assembly resolution 47/199 of 22 December 1992 was thus to be commended. Bulgaria also supported the view that the system should pay due attention to the problems of the countries undertaking radical economic reforms.

5. Within the broader context of collective action to restructure the economic and social sector and adapt it to the new contemporary realities, the decentralization and enhancing of the role of regional and interregional cooperation was particularly important. His delegation attached great importance to the activities of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and to strengthening the Commission's role in enhancing pan-European economic cooperation. Bulgaria was interested in actively participating in ECE programmes and activities at the regional level, including those relating to

(Mr. Andreev, Bulgaria)

environmental protection, the development of transport and transport infrastructure, statistics and trade facilitation.

6. His delegation wished to echo previous delegations which had expressed concern at the late distribution of documents.

7. Mr. HUARAKA (Namibia) said that annual economic statistics did not accurately reflect his country's socio-economic status because they did not show the distortions, caused by measures taken by the previous apartheid regime, in Namibia's economic development, which had been skewed in favour of the white population.

8. In the past, the structural flaws in the development of Namibia and the discriminatory nature of that development had distorted per capita income to such an extent that continued special assistance to Namibia on a scale comparable to that provided to a least developed country was strongly justified.

9. Development agencies which based their financing decisions on income distribution indexes such as per capita income should not overlook the structural economic distortions with which Namibia was faced, a legacy that had left certain sectors of the population at a severe disadvantage while favouring a small minority.

10. Actually, there were two Namibias: one modern and the other traditional, one developed and the other underdeveloped. In 1990, Namibia's gross domestic product (GDP) had been $1.84 billion, which represented a per capita income of $1,314. On the basis of that income level, Namibia was classified as a middle-income country. That income level, however, concealed an extremely dualistic society, with sharp differences in economic conditions and living standards.

11. The modern sector employed approximately 45 per cent of the Namibian population (5 per cent white and 40 per cent black). The per capita income of the white portion of the modern economic sector was about $16,500 per year, while that of the black portion was only $85 per year. Roughly 5 per cent of the population earned 70 per cent of GDP, while the poorest 55 per cent earned only 3 per cent.

12. In Namibia there were two kinds of poverty: extreme degrees of income disparity and widespread absolute poverty. A conservative estimate of absolute poverty suggested that at least two thirds of the total population lived in absolute poverty and that as much as three quarters of the black population was poor. Female-headed households (40 per cent of poor households) comprised the poorest sector. Health indicators were also low because of the existence of widespread poverty and the fact that the pre-independence health care system had not encouraged preventive care, and because health delivery services were not community-oriented. Adult illiteracy was estimated at 60 per cent. There was also a severe housing shortage.

13. While Namibia had indisputably achieved a remarkable degree of democracy and stability in only three years of independence, the disparity in living standards and opportunities between different groups in Namibian society, the varying degrees of access to public services, the disadvantaged position of

(Mr. Huaraka, Namibia)

women, the rate of population growth, high unemployment and the differences between living standards in rural and urban areas demonstrated its economic underdevelopment.

14. His delegation appreciated the efforts made by Member States and the United Nations system and other donor agencies in rendering assistance to Namibia pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/204 of 20 December 1991. However, as the report of the Secretary-General (A/48/498) rightly noted, "The factors that contributed to the adoption of resolution 46/204 are long-lasting and cannot be changed or modified easily in the short run. Given the situation that the majority of the Namibian population have incomes that are far below the national average, and this is in spite of the existence of a few people who enjoy a very high standard of living, it is necessary for the United Nations to continue to give Namibia the 'as if' LDC status to facilitate the country's efforts at mobilizing development resources."

15. Mr. KIM Mun Dok (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that his delegation wished to associate itself with the statement made at the 12th meeting by the representative of Colombia on behalf of the Group of 77 on the important issues relating to the item under discussion. During its recent session, the Economic and Social Council had undertaken the first high-level consideration of preparations for the World Summit for Social Development, including a discussion of the role of the United Nations in encouraging social development.

16. The Summit should not become another typical North-South summit, but should make a real contribution to closing the growing gap between the world's rich and poor. It was important for the developed countries to accept the economic realities of global interdependence and the right of developing countries to develop without having additional conditions imposed on them. Any international efforts to promote social and economic development should respect the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States, their sovereignty and territorial integrity and the right of every State to determine its political system freely.

17. Careful consideration should be given to the proposals to institute annual meetings between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and to invite the latter to submit reports to the Security Council on economic and social developments, as those arrangements might create unexpected problems for the States Members of the United Nations.

18. Restructuring of the economic and social sectors should not entail a reduction in the financial resources allocated for operational activities. The shrinkage of those resources and the failure of the developed countries to honour their commitments under Agenda 21 were a source of concern for the developing countries.

19. His delegation had been a sponsor of the resolution on "The need to harmonize and improve United Nations informatics systems for optimal utilization and accessibility by all States", adopted by the Council at its 1993 substantive session, because his country considered it very important for the missions of Member States to be able to retrieve the information they needed from United

(Mr. Kim Mun Dok, Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

Nations databases. Doing so might alleviate the problem of late documentation to some extent. In 1992, several delegations had expressed their concern at not being able to use their conventional equipment to access the optical disk system at Headquarters; it was to be hoped that the Secretariat would find a solution to that problem.

20. During the Council's consideration of statistical and cartographic questions, his country had urged Japan to rename the "Sea of Japan" immediately and to respond to the proposal to hold talks between the parties concerned in order to find a just solution to the question, as had been suggested by the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names. Calling the sea between Korea and Japan the "Sea of Japan" was irrational. That sea had been called the "East Sea" from ancient times, until Japan had imposed colonial rule over Korea and had forced even Koreans to go by Japanese names. The Korean people called it the "East Korea Sea" or the "East Sea".

21. Delegations from both the north and south of Korea had raised that issue at international gatherings, including regional conferences. His delegation once again urged the Japanese delegation to respond positively to the calls of the Korean people for a solution to that issue - a remnant of Japanese colonial rule, which had imposed nearly half a century of misfortune and suffering on Koreans.

22. Mr. Rysinski (Poland), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

23. Mr. RATUNACEVA (Fiji) said that his delegation supported the efforts that had been made to strengthen the role of the Economic and Social Council and hoped that further measures would be taken to enable the Council to play an important role in the field of international economic cooperation and the management of operational activities. The United Nations had a tremendous responsibility for safeguarding international peace and security, but peace and stability could be undermined if the root causes of socio-economic problems were not addressed. Alleviating poverty and improving access to education, health, nutrition and employment ought to receive the same priority as questions of international peace and security.

24. The Council's focus on the World Summit for Social Development was most appropriate, since 1.3 billion people lived in poverty, more than 30,000 children died each day from malnutrition and disease, 300 million children did not attend school and 1.3 billion people lacked access to safe drinking water. His delegation trusted that the high-level discussion at the recent session would help the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit to prepare for that meeting and to draft appropriate recommendations. It also hoped that the theme for the 1994 high-level segment would be equally relevant.

25. The policy dialogue with the executive heads of multilateral financial and trade institutions during the high-level segment should become standard practice for the sessions, since it would help the Council to carry out its policy-formulation functions. During the coordination segment, the Council had discussed the coordination of policies and activities of the various United Nations agencies in the fields of humanitarian relief and control of malaria and

(Mr. Ratunaceva, Fiji)

diarrhoeal diseases. Coordinating the various elements of the emergency relief systems was essential to the development of effective mechanisms to respond to all emergencies. His delegation hoped that such exchanges of views would continue to figure on the Council's agenda so that duplication of efforts and waste of resources could be minimized.

26. Fiji saw great merit in the proposal to convene joint annual meetings of the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council for the purpose of reviewing the economic and social issues facing the international community. However, the proposal to invite the Economic and Social Council to report to the Security Council on economic and social situations that threatened international peace and security required much closer examination. His delegation was not convinced that such an exercise would be very useful.

27. With regard to the operational activities segment, his delegation believed that, through its contacts with national officials, the United Nations was in a position to provide demand-driven development assistance. In that connection, the country strategy note gave the United Nations system an excellent guide for providing a more coherent response to the plans and priorities of Governments. At the same time, the note could ensure that the principles of various international agreements were incorporated in the national plans. However, it should be prepared by Governments and should be structured so that United Nations assistance was efficiently integrated into the national development process.

28. Mr. Mongbe (Benin) resumed the Chair.

29. Mr. AL-HABIB (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council had reviewed the role of the United Nations system in enhancing international cooperation for development. That role was particularly important at a time when sustained economic growth and development were perceived as prerequisites for international peace and security.

30. The new structure of the Economic and Social Council was well suited to policy coordination. It was regrettable to note, however, that the high-level segment had not yet fully realized its role or its potential contribution to the global economy. Reducing the size of the international bodies might enhance their efficiency, but it should be borne in mind that those bodies represented different interests throughout the world. Reducing their size might lead to the exclusion of many small countries from the programmes and funds in future.

31. The coordination of the various specialized agencies and programmes was a necessary element for successful action and better results. However, better coordination required changes in those agencies, and the Council could play an important role in effecting those changes. In that regard, General Assembly resolution 47/199 of 22 December 1992 was a good basis for improving coordination among the agencies working in the field of operational activities for development.

32. Mr. WIBISONO (Indonesia) noted that the Council, at its substantive session in 1993, had achieved a large measure of convergence on the analysis and prognosis of the current world social situation and the preparation of the World

(Mr. Wibisono, Indonesia)

Summit for Social Development. Given the global nature of the poverty crisis, the changing concept and emerging consensus on development and the increased awareness of the indivisibility of peace, security and development, the World Summit for Social Development was extremely opportune. The Summit should formulate concrete and far-reaching solutions to eliminate poverty and should seek ways and means of resolving the unemployment question. If those two fundamental questions were not resolved, increasing numbers of people would be marginalized and the fragile social situation in many countries would be seriously endangered. Thus, the approach adopted should be one of putting people first, taking into account the right to work and the right to develop.

33. The economic and cultural diversity that defined the present world should be fully taken into account in the preparatory process and at the Summit itself. Since each country and region was unique, a uniform strategy might be counterproductive. The United Nations could therefore serve as a catalyst for cooperation and as a source of financial and technical assistance in the area of social development. The specialized agencies had an important role to play, in particular the International Labour Organization with regard to the question of employment.

34. His delegation supported the Council's agreed conclusions on humanitarian assistance, especially the emphasis on the important leadership role of the Secretary-General, through the Emergency Relief Coordinator working closely with him in coordinating a coherent and timely humanitarian response to major and complex emergencies and natural disasters. At the same time, he stressed the need to address root causes in the search for a more durable solution.

35. Indonesia supported the call of the Group of 77 and China for a substantial increase in resources for operational activities for development. If current problems were not resolved, the capacity of the United Nations for delivering essential services would be severely jeopardized. Since a stable economy and a stable political order could not be built in an unstable society, both aspects must be accorded equal attention. His delegation therefore believed that the World Summit for Social Development was imperative and that it was essential for all countries fully to participate in the preparatory process so that common interests could be built upon and mutual understanding increased, in keeping with the mandate of the Charter to achieve "higher standards of living".

36. Mr. SHAREIM (Observer for Palestine) said that the report of the Secretary-General (A/48/188-E/1993/78) contained a detailed examination of the economic and social repercussions of the establishment of settlements by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory. Those settlements were illegal and were one of the largest obstacles to the achievement of a lasting and comprehensive solution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. They were a flagrant violation of the fourth Geneva Convention and the relevant resolutions of United Nations bodies, in particular Security Council resolution 465 (1980).

37. The Israeli policies, motivated by dominance and occupation and aimed at attaining full control of the Palestinian territory, had forced the Palestinian people to leave the areas that Israel wished to occupy and diverted Palestinian natural resources to Israeli benefit. With the signing by both parties of the Declaration of Principles, which recognized the Palestinian people and their

(Mr. Shareim, Observer, Palestine)

legitimate rights, it was logical to expect that the stage was set for the abolishment of the ideological basis for that policy. The West Bank and Gaza Strip were not Judea and Samaria, and the settlements could not be considered to be security measures for Israel: on the contrary, they constituted a threat to peace in the region. Those policies belonged to the past and should not be taken into the upcoming era.

38. Palestine trusted that the Israeli Government would immediately cease all settlement activities and discontinue all privileges being extended to the settlers, which would be considered a confidence-building measure on the part of the Israelis and would facilitate the implementation of the agreement. His delegation believed that any continuation of the settlement activities was in direct contradiction to the agreement.

39. The international community should continue linking assistance to Israel to the status of those settlement activities, since any final settlement of the conflict should include a fair solution to the problem of the settlements. He sincerely hoped that the Committee would give full support to the draft resolution that his delegation would be introducing with regard to that issue.

40. The occupation had led to the impoverishment of the Palestinian people and caused them to endure many hardships. There must be a broad and continuous international effort to compensate them for their immense losses. Palestine had welcomed the conference to support Middle East peace, held in Washington, D.C., on 1 October 1993, as a first step which should be followed by direct and practical measures for the immediate implementation of its results. Donor countries should take into account the uniqueness of the Palestinian situation and channel their assistance through the official Palestinian institutions.

41. Palestine, which was confident that its institutions would be able to establish a prompt and effective mechanism for the implementation of assistance programmes, called on the United Nations system to begin, without delay, a coordinated effort to assist the Palestinian people and to establish a direct and official presence in the Palestinian territory in order to participate in the process of building the new Palestinian society. Palestine welcomed the steps taken by the Secretary-General in dispatching a mission to assess the measures to be applied by the United Nations. It also called on the donor countries generously to support those programmes.

42. Peace and security could not survive for long without the existence of economic stability and security. Palestine was working towards peace based on economic welfare for its people and neighbours, and for equitable relationships free of political and economic dependence. On that basis, it would be submitting a draft resolution on assistance to the Palestinian people that would take into account the recent positive developments and the good intentions that the international community had expressed in supporting the Palestinian people and their needs and priorities. He hoped that the Committee would send a clear and unambiguous message to the Palestinian people in the occupied territory by fully supporting that resolution and adopting it by consensus.

43. Mr. SHINODA (Japan), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, referred to the remarks of the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of

(Mr. Shinoda, Japan)

Korea concerning the Sea of Japan and said that that term was well established and accepted by the international community. There was no need to change it, either totally or partially. The position of the Government of Japan on the issue was quite clear.

44. Mr. KIM Mun Dok (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) said that the term Sea of Japan had not been accepted, recognized or imposed by any international conference or convention. On the contrary, many of the delegations that had participated in the Sixth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in 1992, had urged the parties concerned to begin negotiations to find an equitable solution to the problem. The most reasonable approach, therefore, would be for Japan to agree to consider possibilities for reconciliation.

45. The CHAIRMAN said that the general debate on agenda item 12 was concluded.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.